velopment of the areas to reduce the biotic pressure thereon.

9. Steps are being initiated to set up site specific "Special Strike Force" in the Project Tiger areas.

Giving benefits of forest produce to Rural Poor

2196. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, at a meeting of Member of Parliament representing Scheduled Castes/Tribes and other weaker sections, called by him certain proposals for ameliorating the condition of the rural poor-marginal farmers and the landless were made, including protection of their rights to access forest produce and afforestation and plantation, on degraded community and public lands, including railway lands.

(b) if so, the details of such proposals; and

(c) the decision taken thereon and action taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) Yes. Sir. A meeting was held with members of Parliament representing reserved constituencies on the 29th July, 1998 at which many suggestions were made on the subject of the involvement of the rural poor in afforestation efforts on community and public lands, including railway lands, with right to usufruct and the protection of the traditional rights of people to forest produce. It was, inter alia, proposed that the traditional rights to forest produce which are necessary to fulfil the daily needs of the people should be respected. The choice of species planted should be done as per the site conditions and the requirements of the local people. Roadside plantation may be fruit bearing and timber which can be used by the local population. The management of such plantations could be assigned to the local villagers, particularly the landless. Cash incentives could be given to the weaker sections for raising plantations on their lands and on wastelands.

The above-mentioned recommendations were discussed at the meeting of the National Afforestation & Eco-Development Board held on the 3rd December '98 in order to evolve the further measures necessary.

Implementation of Project Tiger in Andhra Pradesh

2197. SHRI C. RAMACHAN DRAIAH: Will the Minister OF ENVI RONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Project Tiger is being actively implemented in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the areas selected for creating Tiger-friendly environment in Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) the details of funds allotted for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve has been established in Andhra Pradesh under "Project Tiger" especially, for the protection and management of tiger population and its habitat.

(c) The Central Assistance of Rs. 106.58 Lakhs has been provided for the Reserve during last five years.

Hunting Expedition by Royal Family Members

2198. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some important film Artists have been caught hunting and killing black bucks and other

protected animals in Rajasthan; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether the Minister of State for Welfare is reported to have said that she has report of some erstwhile Royal Family members regularly going on hunting expeditions nearby Delhi, if so, the details thereof and identity of the Royal family concerned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir. As per report received from the Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan on the night of 26th and 28th September, 1998 some film stars have been apprehended for illegal hunting of wild animals. Cases under Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 have been filed against the alleged offenders in the Court of Law.

(b) No specific report of any member of Royal family being involved in the said case has been received from the State Government.

Impact of reduction in import duty on Sugar

2199. SHRI GURDAS DASGUPTA: SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Minister of Finance has proposed to reduce import duty on sugar;

(b) if so, what would be its impact on the indigenous sugar industry; and

(c) what is the availability of sugar and estimated demand for the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) No. Sir.

(b) Docs not arise.

(c) The production of sugar for the current sugar season 1998-99 is provisionally estimated at 150 lakh tonnes. Taking into account the closing stock of sugar of 53.7 lakh tonnes as on 30.9.98 the total availability of sugar is estimated at 203.7 lakh tonnes in sugar season 1988-99. The internal consumption of sugar and exports are provisionally estimated at 144.00 lakh tonnes and 0.8 lakh tonnes respectively.

Release of Traders arrested under PBA

2200. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that traders arrested under Prevention of Black Marketing Act (PBA) by State Governments can be released by the Central Government after reviewing their cases;

(b) whether Government propose to amend such provisions in order to ensure that action taken by State Government is not nullified by the Central Government; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) Under the Prevention of Blackmarketing & Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, the orders made by the State Governments can be revoked or modified by the Central Government.

(b) No. Sir.

(c) No suggestion in this regard has been received from any quarter.

Import of Australian Wheat

2201. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state: